

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

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-----015596 141123Z /12

R 120500Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY MANAMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5628
INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY MUSCAT
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 MANAMA 0092

EXDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TEXT)

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: BA, US, XF
SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTER ON MID EAST PEACE EFFORTS

1. SUMMARY. FOREIGN MINO FSAID JAN 10 THAT CHANCE FOR
MIDDLE EAST PEACE MAY SOON BE LOST IF NEITHER ISRAEL NOR U.S.
MAKE A MOVE AS BOLD AS SADAT'S. SUCH A MOVE WILL NOT COME
FROM ISRAEL, RECENT EVENTS HAVE SHOWN, AND IF IT DOES NOT
COME FROM THE U.S. THE AMOUNT OF ATTENTION PRESIDENT CARTER
HAS GIVEN TO MIDDLE EAST WILL BACKFIRE ON HIM POLITICALLY
BECAUSE ATTENTION WITHOUT DECISIVENESS LEADS ONLY TO FAILURE.
FOREIGN MINISTER SAID HE UNDERSTOOD ANY POLITICIAN'S NATURAL
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TENDENCY TO AVOID CONFRONTATION BUT IT SEEMED TO HIM INHERENT
IN U.S. POSITIONS ON ISSUES THAT CONFRONTATION BETWEEN USG
AND ISRAEL AND ITS AMERICAN SUPPORTERS IS INEVITABLE IF
PEACE IS TO BE ACHIEVED. TIME FOR SUCH CONFRONTATION, IN
HIS VIEW, WILL BE MOMENT WHEN ISRAEL REFUSED TO ACCEPT THAT
ONLY POSSIBLE BASIS FOR PEACE IS AGREEMENT TO PRINCIPLE OF
FULL WITHDRAWAL IN EXCHANGE FOR FULL PEACE. END SUMMARY.

2. FOREIGN MINISTER MOHAMMAD BIN MUBARAK AL KHALIFA, IS A WELL-INFORMED AND THOUGHTFUL OBSERVER OF MIDDLE EAST SCENE AND ONE WHO HAS BEEN CONSISTENTLY HOPEFUL, THOUGH NOT OPTIMISTIC, THAT SADAT INITIATIVE WOULD SUCCEED. DURING LENGTHY DISCUSSION WITH ME JAN 10 HIS HOPE THAT PEACE MIGHT BE POSSIBLE WAS AT LOW EBB AND HIS USUALLY COOL MANNER WAS, AS HE ADMITTED, INCREASINGLY INTERRUPTED BY FEELINGS OF FRUSTRATION. I BRIEFED HIM ON RECENT EVENTS IN THE PEACE PROCESS, DRAWING INTER ALIA ON THE PRESIDENT'S AIRBORNE INTERVIEW AND THE NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISERS'S REMARKS CARRIED IN JAN 9 WIRELESS FILE. I SHARED WITH HIM ITEMS FROM THE U.S. PRESS AND REVIEWED FOR HIM THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN ISRAEL AS REFLECTED IN EMBASSY TEL AVIV'S EXCELLENT DAILY PRESS CABLE.

3. NEWS THAT ISRAELI CABINET HAD REJECTED ARIK SHARON'S GRANDOISE SETTLEMENT SCHEMES SET FOREIGN MINISTER OFF ON LENGTHY EXPOSE OF HIS VIEWS ON PEACE PROCESS. HE SAID VERY FACT THAT ISRAELIS HAD TO ARGUE OVER SIMPLE MATTER OF NOT INSULTING EGYPT AND WORLD BY BUILDING MORE ILLEGAL SETTLEMENTS "PROVED" THAT ISRAELIS SIMPLY INCAPABLE OF MAKING PEACE. WEST BANK MAY HAVE TO BE TREATED AS A SPECIAL CASE, HE SAID, BUT THERE IS NO QUESTION OF WHERE INTERNATIONAL BORDER WAS AND MUST BE AGAIN IN SINI AND GOLAN HEIGHTS. "ISRAEL EITHER IS LYING TO ITS OWN PEOPLE IN TELLING SETTLERS THAT THEY CAN STAY IN ARAB LAND OR IT IS LYING TO WORLD ABOUT
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ITS DESIRE FOR PEACE."

4. FOREIGN MINISTER SAID THAT DISCUSSION AND FERMENT IN ISRAEL IS A GOOD THING IF IT IS ABOUT REAL ISSUES OF PEACE BUT HE IS INCREASINGLY DISCOURAGED TO READ IN JERUSALEM POST AND ELSEWHERE THAT ISRAELIS AND THEIR POLITICAL PARTIES ARE ARGUING ABOUT HOW MUCH TERRITORY TO RETURN, WHICH SETTLEMENTS TO KEEP, AND HOW MANY DECADES PALESTINIANS MUST BE KEPT SUBJUGATED. EVEN DOVES ON THESE ISSUES ARE TOO FAR FROM REALITY TO MAKE PEACE POSSIBLE. FOREIGN MINISTER SAID THAT, AS HE UNDERSTOOD IT, BEGIN PLAN EVEN FOR SINAI DENIES EGYPT FULL SOVEREIGNTY OVER ITS LAND. HE SAID LETTER FROM SADAT WHICH MARWAN BROUGHT AFTER ISMAILIA SAID ISRAEL HAD AGREED TO GIVE UP ALL OF SINAI. WHEN ASKED ABOUT AIR BASES, SETTLEMENTS, FREEDOM OF EGYPT TO EXERCISE ITS SOVEREIGNTY, MARWAN DISMISSED THESE KINDS OF QUESTIONS AS "DETAILS". FOREIGN MINISTER SAID HE UNDERSTOOD FULLY NEED FOR TRANSITION PERIOD IN REACHING FINAL PEACE AND FELT ARABS COULD BE FLEXIBLE ABOUT THIS -- THREE TO FIVE YEARS SEEMED REASONABLE -- BUT ISRAEL MUST ACCEPT THAT THE FULFILLING PEACE WHICH SADAT HAS OFFERED WILL HAVE TO BE MATCHED AT SOME POINT BY FULL WITHDRAWAL.

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5. FOREIGN MINISTER CONTINUED THAT EVERYTHING HE HAS READ

AND HEARD ABOUT REACTIONS WITHIN ISRAEL TO PEACE PROCESS
HAS CONVINCED HIM THAT SADAT IS MORE LIKELY TO FAIL THAN TO
SUCCEED IN GETTING SETTLEMENT AGREEABLE TO OTHER CONFRONTATION
STATES AND PALESTINIANS. HE SAID ISRAEL'S LABOR PARTY IS
NOW MORE HAWKISH THAN EVER, THAT DAYAN PERSISTS IN TELLING
SETTLERS THAT THEY WILL ALWAYS REMAIN ON ARAB LAND AND BE
DEFENDED BY IDF. HE HAS HEARD FEW IF ANY ISRAELI VOICES
CRITICIZE BEGIN'S PLAN AS COMPLETELY INADEQUATE RESPONSE TO
SADAT'S OFFER OF REAL PEACE. INSTEAD, HE WENT ON, HE READS
AND HEARS THAT MOST ISRAELIS FEEL BEGIN HAS GONE TOO FAR,
TOO FAST. HOW CAN PEACE BE FASHIONED WHEN ONE SIDE HAS MOVED
SO BRAVELY TO OFFER THE AREA REAL PEACE AND OTHER RESPONDS

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WITH SAME OLD PLANS TO KEEP LANDS AND PEOPLES UNDER OCCUPATION
FOR GENERATIONS TO COME.

6. TURNING TO U.S. ROLE, FOREIGN MINISTER SAID

ARAB STATES

APPRECIATE AMOUNT OF ATTENTION CARTER ADMINISTRATION HAS GIVEN
TO MIDDLE EAST PROBLEM. HE HAS BEGUN TO WONDER, HOWEVER,
IF THIS WAS WISE. PRESIDENT CARTER HAS MANY PROBLEMS AND
ISSUES TO DEAL WITH AND AMERICAN MAGAZINES WRITE THAT SOME
OF THESE HAVE BEEN GIVEN TOO LITTLE ATTENTION, PERHAPS DUE TO
THE PRIORITY GIVEN TO MIDDLE EAST. FOREIGN MINISTER SAID
HE HAD BEGUN TO FEEL THIS WAY BECAUSE HE SEES LITTLE EVIDENCE
THAT UNITED STATES IS READY TO MATCH SADAT'S COURAGE BY
SIMILAR LEAP FORWARD OF ITS OWN. IT WOULD BE BEST OF COURSE
IF ISRAEL WOULD MAKE SUCH A MOVE BUT, AS RECENT EVENTS HAVE
SHOWN, ISRAEL CANNOT OR WILL NOT. THEREFORE, HE SAID, IT IS
UP TO U.S. TO MAKE THE DRAMATIC MOVE WHICH HE IS CONVINCED
SITUATION REQUIRES. IS U.S. IS NOT PREPARED TO DO THIS THEN
ALL THE ATTENTION PRESIDENT CARTER HAS GIVEN TO MIDDLE EAST
WILL HAVE BEEN FOR NOTHING AND RESULT MIGHT BE SERIOUS DAMAGE
TO HIS ADMINISTRATION. HE CONTINUED THAT HE UNDERSTOOD VERY
WELL THAT POLITICIANS HAVE NATURAL TENDENCY TO AVOID CON-
FRONTATION BUT IN THIS CASE PRESIDENT CARTER SHOULD FOLLOW
PRESIDENT SADAT IN RESISTING THIS TENDENCY. FOREIGN MINISTER
SAID HE FELT THAT CONFRONTATION BETWEEN ISRAEL AND U.S. IS
INEVITABLE GIVEN U.S. POSITIONS ON SUBSTANCE OF MIDDLE EAST
PEACE. TIMING FOR CONFRONTATION ON SUBSTANCE OF PEACE WILL
BE, IN HIS VIEW, MOMENT WHEN ISRAEL REFUSES TO ACCEPT THAT
THE BASIS OF PEACE MUST BE AGREEMENT TO THE PRINCIPLE OF
FULL PEACE IN EXCHANGE FOR FULL WITHDRAWAL.

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7. FOREIGN MINISTER SAID THAT HE WAS DISAPPOINTED BY U.S.
REACTION TO BEGIN'S DENIAL OF RIGHT OF SELF-DETERMINATION
FOR PALESTINIANS. HE OPINED THAT IF SUCH A DENIAL HAD
COME FROM ANY OTHER LEADER IN THE WORLD THE UNITED STATES
WOULD HAVE MADE A STRONG RESPONSE. HOW CAN U.S. NOT SUPPORT
FULLY THE RIGHT OF PALESTINIAN SELF-DETERMINATION? IT IS

A MORAL POSITION AND POLITICALLY IT IS KEY TO MID EAST PEACE.
FOREIGN MINISTER SAID HE WAS NOT SO UNREALISTIC AS TO EXPECT
INSTANT EXERCISE OF THIS RIGHT BUT ITS EXISTENCE MUST BE
RECOGNIZED FROM THE OUTSET AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION NOT LONG
DELAYED. HE SAID THAT IF U.S. CAN MOVE ISRAEL TO ACCEPT
THESE BASIC PRINCIPLES TO PEACE IT WILL BE GREAT ACHIEVEMENT;
BUT HE WONDERED IF U.S. HAD COURAGE TO TAKE A STEP WHICH WAS
BOUND TO BE DOMESTICALLY PAINFUL AND FOR ADMINISTRATION. IN ANY

CASE, FOREIGN MINISTER SAID, HE WOULD WATCH FORTHCOMING JERUSALEM MEETING FOR SIGNS THAT THE U.S. IS PREPARED TO GIVE SADAT THE SUPPORT WHICH IS INITIATIVE NOW DESPARATELY NEEDS.

8. COMMENT: FOREIGN MINISTER NORMALLY KEEPS A COOL HEAD ON ARAB-ISRAEL ISSUES, SELDOM OVER-REACTING TO TRANSIENT EVENTS IN THE MANNER OF MANY IN ARAB WORLD. INTELLECTUALLY HE REALIZES THAT TOUGH ISSUES ARE NOT RESOLVED OVER NIGHT AND THAT TODAY'S BAD NEWS OFTEN CARRIES WITH IT THE SEEDS OF FUTURE SUCCESS. HIS OBVIOUS FRUSTRATION AND ANXIETY IN JAN 10 CONVERSATION WAS FOR HIM ATYPICAL. IT IS, HOWEVER, INCREASINGLY TYPICAL OF THE GENERAL MOOD HERE. (ERIC PACE OF NYT, HERE WRITING ARTICLES AFTER RECENT SOJOURN IN SAUDI ARABIA, HAS TOLD ME THAT A MOOD OF REAL ANXIETY IS GROWING RAPIDLY THERE AS WELL.) THE VERY DRAMA OF SADAT'S MOVES HAS PRODUCED EXPECTATION, AND FEAR, OF GREATER DRAMA YET TO COME. PEOPLE DO NOT REACT WELL TO DRAWN OUT CLIFF-HANGERS AND
THUS ANXIETY GROWS AS A DEFINITIVE OUTCOME
IS DELAYED. FAIRLY OR NOT, ARABS' FEELINGS PROBABLY
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ARE VERY HIGH THAT THE JERUSALEM MINISTERIAL MEETING SHOULD PRODUCE THE OUTCOME WHICH THEIR ANXIETY DEMANDS. IF OUTCOME OF THAT MEETING IS NOT A DECLARATION OF THE PRINCIPLES OF PEACE, FULL PEACE FOR FULL WITHDRAWAL, OR VERY CLOSE TO IT, I EXPECT THE ANXIETY LEVEL HERE WILL LEAP UPWARD, AS WILL THE CREDIBILITY OF THOSE WHO SAY SADAT CANNOT SUCCEED.
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